

Lou Reed on Andy Warhol

Andy Warhol, as his current retrospective at Film Forum reminds us, loved to watch. *Anything*. His 1964 movie *Empire* was a continuous static shot of the Empire State Building, and *The Velvet Underground and Nico* (1966) was a 67-minute recording of the group rehearsing one song, "Melody Laughter," until the cops barged in to make them turn down the amps. "I think they thought we were the center of some huge drug ring," jokes VU frontman Lou Reed, whose band's wildly influential multimedia stage shows were orchestrated by Warhol. The aforementioned rehearsal was probably for a performance at the Film-Makers' Cinematheque in February 1966. Warhol had a week to fill, remembers Reed, "and he'd seen us play, and he said, 'Oh, oh, *ohhhh*. I don't know what I'm going to do. I have a week there. Why don't I show the movies on you?' And he did. . . . He was a giant. It was the greatest fun being around him. He was *so smart*. Very, very funny. I really miss him."

Oddly, given all of Warhol's involvement, says Reed, "he never filmed the show itself, which is amazing. He taped everything else, but not that. And there's not a club that I've been to that doesn't show the influence of them: the light shows, wearing all black . . . usually you'll even see our little mirror ball." Some of Warhol's innovations, however, didn't stand the test of time quite as well. "He would often have people in the audience work the light machines," says Reed, "which was an expensive thing to do because people would drop them."



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